CGC UNIVERSAL GRADE

9.9

A Darkelfling Scan

OFF-WHITE Pages

Len Wein and Chris Claremont story
Dave Cockrum and Bob McLeod art
Gil Kane and Dave Cockrum cover

0700081015

Marv Wolfman begins. Scathe leaves.
Second appearance Nightcrawler, Storm,
Thunderbird and Colossus

CGC

FIRST COMICS 1987
FIFTH
APR 1988
5
LIMITED SERIES
NO. 5 OF 6
$1.75 $2.25 CANADA

michael moorcock's

Elric

the vanishing tower

Roy thomas and Jan duursema

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WHO ARE THESE GUYS, ANYWAY?

For ten thousand years the sorcerer-kings of **Melniboné** had ruled the Bright Empire aided by pacts with the ancient gods of Chaos.

Last to sit on the Ruby Throne was the albino, **Elric**. Weak and sickly, kept alive by sorcery and drugs, he was unlike his inhuman subjects for he possessed a conscience, though he often chose not to heed it.

With his throne usurped by his mad cousin, **Yyrkoon**, and his beloved **Cymoril** placed in a sorcerous sleep, Elric was manipulated by the Chaos lord, **Arioch**, into claiming the runeblade **Stormbringer**. With the sword, Elric needed no longer fear his weakness, for Stormbringer drank souls and would share its stolen life with him. So for vengeance and love, Elric lead an armada against Melniboné. But fate betrayed him, for in destroying Yyrkoon he was also responsible, albeit unwillingly, for razing Imrryr and for Cymoril's death.

Now Elric — kinslayer, womanslayer and traitor — is a wanderer. Hated by his scattered subjects and feared by humans, his only companion is **Moonglum of Elwher**.

LAST ISSUE: The **Actorios** — the ring of kings that aids his spells — was stolen from Elric. Tracking the thief to the city of beggars, Elric confronted **Theleb K'Aarna**, his old enemy. It was a trap. Elric escaped but learned that Theleb had set a demon to guard **Urish's** hoard — and the ring — while they attacked **Rackhir** and the Tanelorn caravan. Now, bereft of the Actorious, Elric pursues them all...

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ELRIC: THE VANISHING TOWER™ Vol. 1, No. 5, April 1988. Published by FIRST COMICS, INC., OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 435 N. LaSalle, Chicago IL 60610. Published bi-monthly.

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Adapted from the original novel by Michael Moorcock. Price: $1.75 in the U.S. Subscription rates for twelve issues: $21.00 in the U.S., $23.00 in Canada, and $40.00 foreign rate. All payments must be in U.S. funds.

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Printed in the U.S.A **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Elric**, c/o First Comics, Inc., 435 N. LaSalle, Chicago IL 60610.

A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

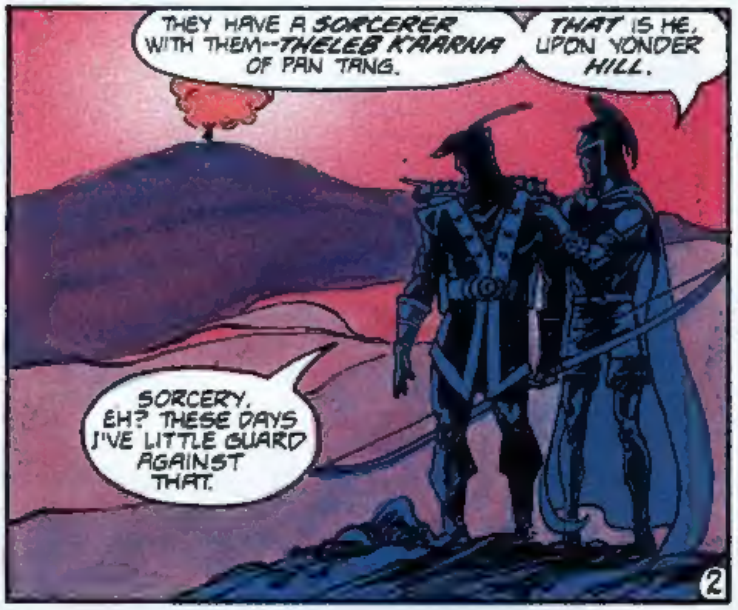
ELRIC ETERNAL
FOLLOW ME, MOONGLUM-- WE MUST CARVE A PATH THROUGH THIS BEGGAR ARMY!
BEST SPUR YOUR MOUNT, FRIEND ELRIC--OR YOU SHALL BE FOLLOWING ME!
MOVE, NAG-- LEST THE BEGGAR RANKS CLOSE AROUND US!
CONTINUING THE ADAPTATION OF MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S
THE VANISHING TOWER
BY
ROY THOMAS SCRIPTER · JAN DUURSEMA PENCILLER · NICHOLAS KOENIG INKER
CARRIE SPIEGLE LETTERER · LOVERN KINDZIERSKI COLORIST · LAUREL FITCH EDITOR

ELRIC! AS I LIVE AND DRAW BREATH!
HAVE YOU COME TO HELP US SEND URISH AND HIS BEGGARS BACK TO WHENCE THEY CAME?

AND YOU--MOONGLUM!? WHEN DID YOU TWO MEET?
I'VE SEEN NEITHER OF YOU SINCE I LEFT THE EASTLANDS.
MUCH HAS COME TO PASS SINCE THOSE DAYS, RACKHIR.
AYE, SO I'VE HEARD.

NO TIME FOR REMINISCENCES, RED ARCHER. YOU ARE IN GREATER DANGER THAN YOU KNOW.
BUT I WILL SAY--YOU'VE AN ENVIABLE LOOK OF PEACE IN YOUR EYES... FAR DIFFERENT FROM THOSE DAYS WHEN YOU SERVED CHAOS AS A WARRIOR PRIEST.
I TAKE IT YOU FOUND WHAT YOU SOUGHT--THE LOST CITY OF TANELORN?

INDEED I DID, OLD FRIEND. BUT--YOU SPOKE OF DANGER?
SINCE WHEN DID THE POORLY-ARMED BEGGAR RABBLE OF NADSOKOR OFFER ANYTHING TO FEAR?


THEY HAVE A SORCERER WITH THEM--THELEB K'AARNA OF PAN TANG.
THAT IS HE, UPON YONDER HILL.
SORCERY, EH? THESE DAYS I'VE LITTLE GUARD AGAINST THAT.

AND THE WIZARDS OF PAN TANG NEARLY EQUAL YOUR FOLK IN THEIR SKILLS.
I FEAR THIS ONE MORE THAN EQUALS ME AT PRESENT, FOR MY ACTORIOS RING HAS BEEN STOLEN BY URISH.
STILL, IF YOU CUT LOOSE YOUR HORSES SO THAT ALL YOUR PEOPLE COULD BE MOUNTED, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE BEFORE THELEB K'AARNA INVOKES WHATEVER SUPERNATURAL AID IT IS HE SEEKS.
TANELORN NEEDS THE PROVISIONS WE CARRY, ELRIC.
BRUT!? IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, WARRIOR OF LASHMAR.
BRUT SPEAKS THE TRUTH, ALBINO. WE CANNOT ABANDON OUR PURPOSE.
WE SHALL SIMPLY HAVE TO DEFEND OURSELVES AS BEST WE--
LOOK! THERE--ON THE HILLTOP--
--THELEB K'AARNA HAS FORMED A BILLOWING CLOUD OF REDNESS--LIKE BLOOD IN CLEAR WATER!
THIS BODES NOT WELL MY FRIENDS!
3

THEN WE'VE NO CHOICE, ELRIC. WE'VE NO TIME TO PREPARE FURTHER DEFENSES.
AT LEAST WE'LL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING ON HORSEBACK WHEN THEY--
MEET THEM WEAPON AGAINST WEAPON, CARKAN!
THEY DIE EASILY, BRUT! WHAT USE THEIR RUSTED SWORDS AGAINST OUR PIKES AND AXES--AND RACKHIR'S DEADLY ARROWS?
ATTACK, MY BEGGARS! THEY ARE DOOMED!
PTUI! SUCH CREATURES ARE UNFIT OPPONENTS FOR THE WARRIORS OF TANELORN.
THEN PERHAPS THEY WILL PREFER THEIR NEW FOES.
4

BY THE GODS!
TH- THEY ARE WOMEN, ELRIC!
THEY ARE NOT WOMEN.
THEY ARE... ELENOIN.
5

LISTEN TO THEM, ELRIC-- THEIR SHRILL ULULATIONS, THEY DANCE TO THE BATTLE WITH MY WARRIORS!
THEY COME FROM THE EIGHTH PLANE...AND NEITHER ARE THEY HUMAN, RACKHIR.
THELEB K'AARNA IS CLEVER. YOUR WARRIORS WILL HESITATE BEFORE STRIKING AT WOMEN...
...AND WHILE THEY HESITATE, THE ELENOIN WILL RIP AND SLASH AND SLAY THEM!
WHAT CAN WE DO, THEN?
HAVE YOU NO SORCERY YOU CAN USE AGAINST THEM?
WITH THE RING OF KINGS I COULD SUMMON THE GRAHLUK, PERHAPS.
THEY ARE THE ANCIENT ENEMIES OF THE ELENOIN... AND SINCE THELEB K'AARNA HAS ALREADY MADE A GATEWAY FROM THE EIGHTH PLANE...
BUT WHILE I TRIED TO CALL THE GRAHLUK, MY SWORD WOULD NOT BE AIDING YOU.
I THINK STORMBRINGER IS OF MORE USE TODAY THAN SPELLS!
THEN...WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN.
6

REFORM YOUR RANKS, MEN!
IF WE'RE TO DIE, AT LEAST IT WILL BE IN BATTLE WITH FORCES BEYOND OUR POWER, NOT WITH URISH'S RABBLE--
--WHICH FLEES IN TERROR FROM THEIR OWN WEIRD-ALLIES!
EVEN WITH THE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR SEX, ELRIC, HOW CAN THESE ELENDIN POSSIBLY HOPE TO--
ELRIC-- THEIR TEETH--
--THEY GLINT IN THE SUN LIKE METAL FANGS!
7

I KNOW, MOONGLUM
MY MELNIBONÉAN ANCESTORS FOUGHT THE ELENDIN ONCE, LONG AGO.
...AND MANY OF THEM DID NOT LIVE TO HEAR THE TALES OF HORROR LATER SPUN OF THAT DAY
BACK, DEMONS!
BACK, SPAWN OF HELL!
AAAA
LOOLOOLOOLOOL
ELRIC! RACKHIR AND HIS MEN--ALL OF US--ARE DEAD MEN UNLESS YOU EMPLOY SOME SORCERY AGAINST THESE FIENDS
8

I CANNOT SUMMON THE GRAHLUK, MOONG-LUM
FOR THE SAKE OF TANELORN, IF NOT FOR OUR OWN--YOU MUST TRY!
WITHOUT THE RING OF KINGS--
BUT WHAT MY BLACK BLADE MAY DO. .THAT SHALL BE DONE!
ARIOCH!
ARIOCH!
OLOOLOOLOO
BLOOD AND SOULS FOR MY LORD ARIOCH!
BLOOD AND SOULS--
--AND A HEAD!
9

I CAN USE YOU, AS WELL--
ARRGH!!
--OR AT LEAST YOUR CORPSE--
--BACK AT THE TANELORN CAMP!
I'VE A SPELL TO INVOKE, DAMN ME--
--ONE THAT NEEDS THE HAIR OF AN ELENOVN--
--SOAKED IN THE BLOOD OF AN ENEMY!
AND NOW--
"GRAHLUK COME AND GRAHLUK SLAY! COME KILL THINE ANCIENT ENEMY!..
M-MAKE THIS...THY VICTORY DAY!
"GRAHLUK ...S-SPEED WITH-OUT DELAY! COME K-K-KILL.. THINE ANCIENT ENEMY!....
MAKE TH-THIS...
"...THY.. VENGEANCE... DAY."
HULK
10

HRRLKKK!
TH... THERE...

FIRST NOTES

Do you have as much fun as I do at Christmas time? Do you spend 364 days anticipating the great event, with 363 of them spent avoiding the holiday shopping crowds? Do you go to the nearest shopping mall on December 24 with a list of 30 or 40 friends and associates for whom you're *really* going to get a present this year for sure, but with absolutely no idea what it will be, hoping to be inspired by some truly fascinating do-hickey in an obscure little shop? Do you pare the list down to your three closest relatives in desperation as the day wears on, trying to concoct some plausible explanation as to why you thought your father might actually want a pair of women's shoes? Do you feel it's a strong possibility that you may well strangle the next person who says "Surprise me" when you ask just what the hell it is they want for goddamn Christmas!?

Well, unlax, joyous holiday reveller. Your yuletide woes are a thing of past. Using the latest marketing focus group techniques and rigid scientific random sampling, we have compiled the Complete Christmas Checklist, guaranteed to make all your Christmas giftees gasp in wonder. Of course, the focus group consists entirely of my one year old daughter, Kendall, and the random sample consists of books randomly strewn about my office. But it's probably better than what you've got so far . . . which most likely is nothing.

COMPLETE CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

Cynicalman . . . The Paperback!
By Matt Feazell.
In which Cynicalman battles a giant slug, foils the diabolical Dr. Pweent, teams up with the irrepressible Antisocialman, and spouts great dialog like, "Yikes, that's a *real* giant slug!" and "I hope nobody calls me with a dumb job today." The first 12 issues of **The Amazing Cynicalman** complete in one volume, plus guest appearances by Cutegirl, Stupid Boy, and the aforementioned Antisocialman. Who could ask for more? The perfect gift for anyone with anything resembling a sense of humor. From Thunder Bass Press.

Eddy Current
"A twelve hour book" by **Ted McKeever.** Eddy sent away for the Dynamic Fusion Suit. It's guaranteed to magnify Eddy's strength "lots of times." Eddy has twelve hours to save the world. Eddy knows his mission is difficult. ("I attempt to still their hearts with fear . . . I must look like a real jerk.") Eddy hates Elvis movies. Eddy just escaped from the asylum. He's my kinda guy. This is not a comic for everyone . . . but it *should* be. Guaranteed to alienate *X-Men* fanatics. From Mad Dog Graphics.

Sam & Max, Freelance Police
By Steve Purcell
Sam is a dog, and Max is a bunny . . . sort of. They're real cute. They have real big guns. They fight urban crime. They park illegally because Max can't see over the top of the steering wheel. A tightly plotted comic masterpiece in which the villainous psychic surgeon spontaneously combusts just when you thought there was no possible escape for our heroes. Well, it's better than waking up from a horrible dream in which you're married to both Lois Lane and Lana Lang, isn't it? Guaranteed to outrage the medical community. From Fishwrap Graphics.

Space Ghost
By Steve Rude and Mark Evanier
The cartoon character that inspired the Dude to create the visual image of **Nexus**, possibly the greatest comic book of all time. Guaranteed to prevent Steve from rendering me senseless. From Comico.

Munden's Bar Annual
By Mike Baron, Hilary Barta, Brian Bolland, Del Close, Matt Feazell, Steve Moncuse, Jerry Ordway, John Ostrander, Steve Rude, and Joe Staton. Three classic favorites, three brand new stories, 48 full-color pages, all for only $2.95. On sale now! From First Comics.

Hey, you didn't think I'd get out of this without plugging at least one of *our* books, did you?

—Rick Oliver

FIRST IN DECEMBER

Lone Wolf and Cub #8: By **Kazuo Koike** and **Goseki Kojima.** Cover and introduction by **Frank Miller.** 64 pages. Black-and-white. $2.50.

Badger #34. Ham and Badger square off against a horde of biker demons from hell! Part one of two by **Mike Baron, Ron Lim.** Cover by **Mike Zeck.** $1.75.

Nexus #43 . Guest artist **Paul Smith** joins writer **Mike Baron** and paints a "Portrait of Death." $1.75.

Grimjack #45: The Demon Gate is open and the Dancer's reign of terror begins. By **John Ostrander** and **Tom Mandrake.**

Psychoblast #6: Can Psychoblast survive "Psych-Out?" By **Steven Grant, Robb Phipps** and **Al Vey.** $1.75.

Whisper #12: Christmas cheer turns to fear when a psychotic killer makes a list and checks it twice — steal the Whisper costume and murder Di Young! By **Steven Grant** and **Rich Larson.** Cover by **Bill Sienkiewicz**.

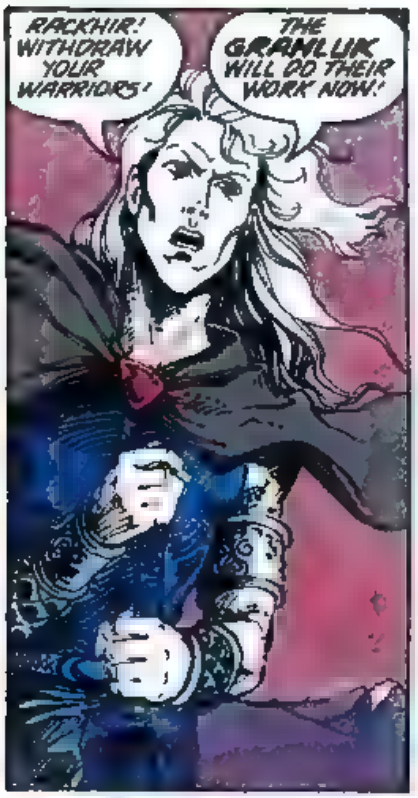
Munden's Bar Annual #1: Hey, how about that? Two plugs on one page. Look over to your left and down for more exciting info of this extravaganza. Cover by **Jerry Ordway** $2.95.

Elric #5. The Albino Prince must fight his way through the Beggar Army, the mystical Horsemen of Tanelorn and the vampiric Elenoin, to reclaim his stolen Ring of Kings. By **Roy Thomas** and **Jan Duursema.** Bi-monthly series. $1.75.

Sable: Return of the Hunter #2: In war torn Tehran, Sable seeks revenge fro the death of a friend. By **Marv Wolfman** and **Bill Jaaska.** $1.75.

Shatter #14. Daley city is dying, and only those in self-contained, sealed biospheres will survive — and only Shatter can save the rest of the world! By **Jay Case** and **Charlie Athanas.** Bi-monthly series. $1.75

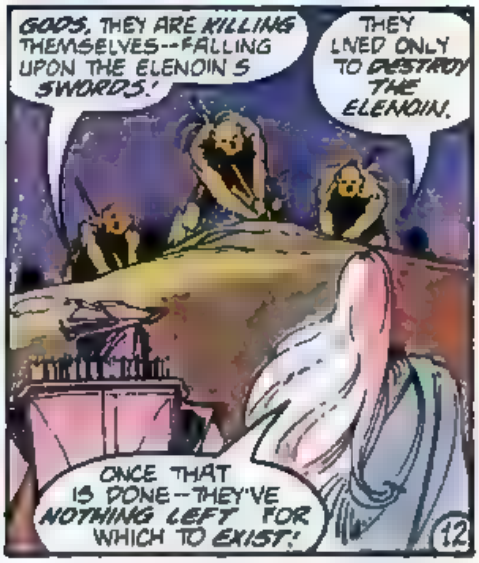
HRLGH!
OOL OOLOO
GRLLK!


RACKHIR! WITHDRAW YOUR WARRIORS!
THE GRAMLIK WILL DO THEIR WORK NOW!

THEN--YOU DID HELP US, AFTER ALL!

HRLG
OLOOLO

GRLLKK
WH-WHAT NOW, ELRIC? WILL THEY DEVOUR US, WHEN THEY HAVE FINISHED THE ELENOIN?


GODS, THEY ARE KILLING THEMSELVES--FALLING UPON THE ELENOIN'S SWORDS!
THEY LIVED ONLY TO DESTROY THE ELENOIN.
ONCE THAT IS DONE--THEY'VE NOTHING LEFT FOR WHICH TO EXIST!
12

LOOK! THE BEGGAR ARMY, TOO, IS DISPERSED. WE'VE WON!
NOT WHILE THELEB K'AARNA LIVES! WE MUST GET THELEB K'AARNA!
DOUBTLESS HE'S GONE BACK WITH URISH TO NADSOKOR.
I MUST--I MUST RETRIEVE THE RING OF KINGS!
ELRIC..
BUT PLAINLY, YOU CAN WORK YOUR SORCERY WITHOUT IT
CAN I?
IF YOU WISH, MY MEN AND I WILL RIDE WITH YOU AND HELP GET BACK YOUR RING
I.. HAD HOPED AS MUCH. PERHAPS YOUR ARROWS WILL SLAY WHAT MY SWORD CANNOT
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU.
I WILL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY.
13

KROSKOR, THE CITY OF BEGGARS.
AT LEAST URISH'S SUBJECTS COWER IN THE SHADOWS, NOT DARING TO ATTACK US.
THEY KNOW MY WARRIORS WILL LEVEL THIS HELLHOLE TO THE GROUND IF THEY DO.
WELL, THERE'S THE PALACE ROYAL. SHALL WE RIDE RIGHT IN, ELRIC?
AYE

THELEB K'AARNA!
HE IS NOT HERE

ONLY THIS MISERABLE WRETCH, WHO BORES ME WITH HIS IMPORTUNING

HE--THELEB FLED, PRINCE ELRIC--TOWARD THE VARKALK RIVER--TOWARD TROOS!
GOOD EVENING, KING URISH.

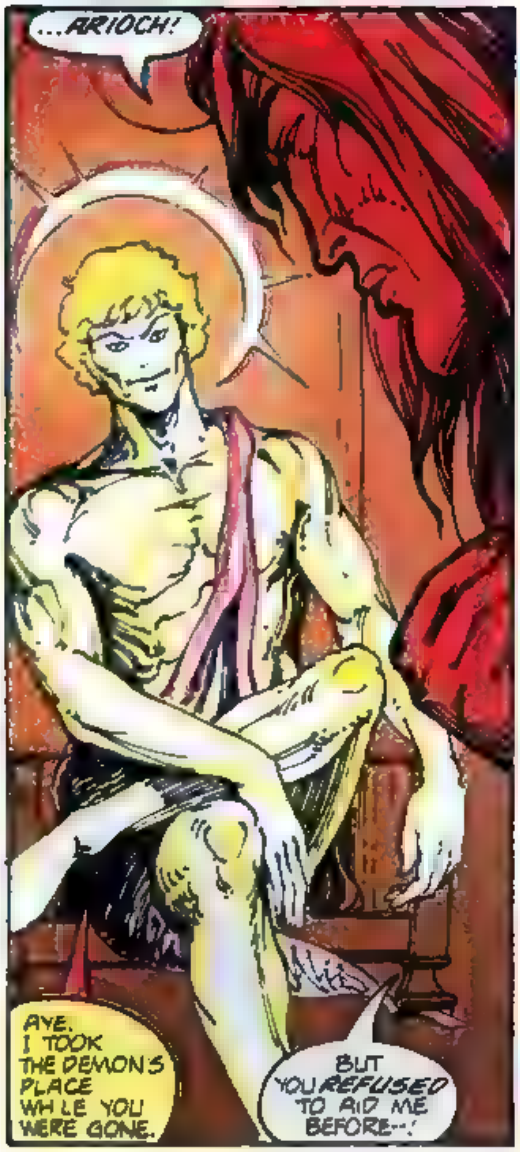
DO NOT FEAR ME. I AM WEARY OF BLOOD-LETTING.
I DO NOT WANT YOUR USELESS LIFE

NO, ELRIC. YOU WANT ONLY YOUR RINGS. DO YOU NOT... WHICH IS NOW A PART OF KING URISH'S HOARD. BUT THELEB K'AARNA LEFT ME HERE TO GUARD THAT HOARD, EVEN FROM URISH HIMSELF... TILL HE RETURNS, OR FOR ETERNITY, WHICHEVER COMES FIRST.
ELRIC—HELP ME! DESTROY THE WIZARD'S DEMON, AND I WILL GIVE YOU BACK THE RING OF KINGS!
YOU ARE MOST GENEROUS, URISH.
PLEASE, I--! MUST HAVE MY HOARD! IT IS EVERY-THING TO ME!
RACKHIR? WILL YOU TRY YOUR ARROWS NOW?
PLINK
HMMM...
VERY INTERESTING.
ARAGH! IT WILL NOT WORK!
HE ABSORBS THE SHAFT INTO HIMSELF WITH THE MEREST BREATH!
15

THE HOARD IS MINE!
LET HACKMEAT SPEAK FOR URISH!
KKRRAKK
DIDN'T THELEB K'ARRN'A TELL YOU, BEGGAR KING, ABOUT MY WARDPACT AGAINST SWORDS--AND LIKE WEAPONS?
NO!
NEVER MIND
YOU KNOW NOW, DON'T YOU?
MMOOOC
16

YOUR WARDPACT IS QUITE EFFECTIVE.
EH? YOUR TONE OF VOICE...SO FAMILIAR. YOU ARE NO ORDINARY DEMON.
AYE SWEET ELRIC

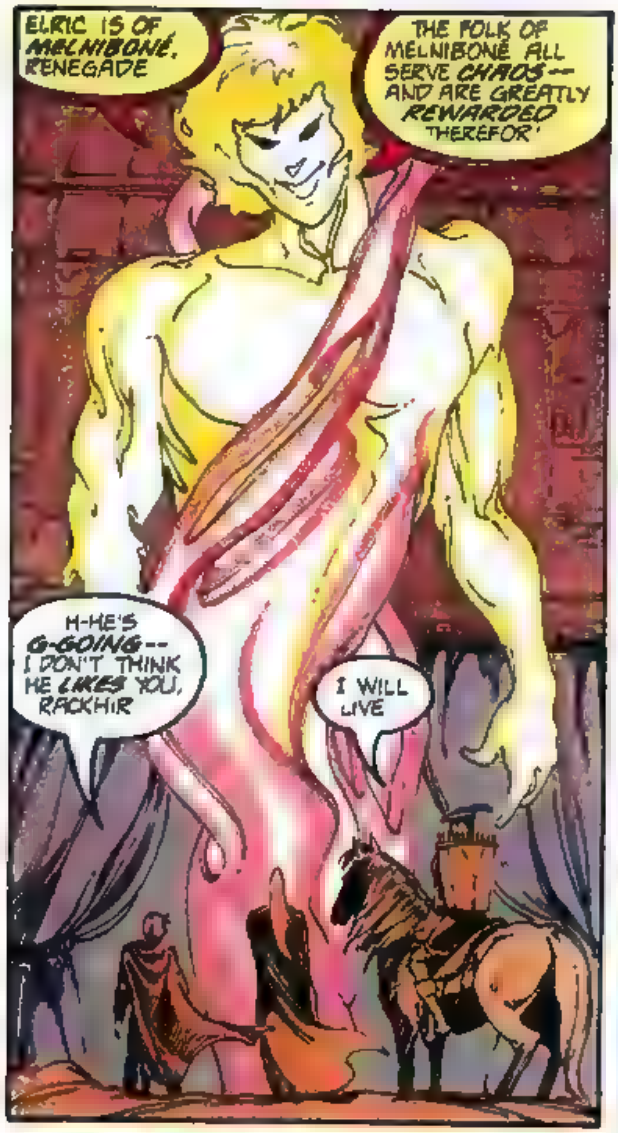
I SHOULD HOPE NOT.
ELRIC--! THE THING'S VERY SHAPE BEGINS TO ALTER!
WHIPS
DO NOT FEAR MOONGLUM. IT IS...

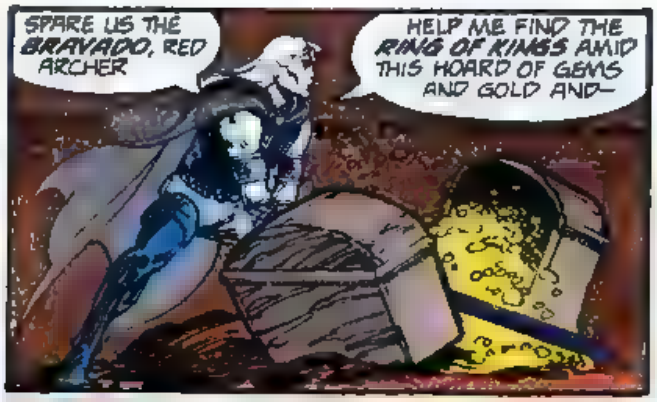

...ARIOCH!
AYE. I TOOK THE DEMON'S PLACE WHILE YOU WERE GONE.
BUT YOU REFUSED TO AID ME BEFORE--!

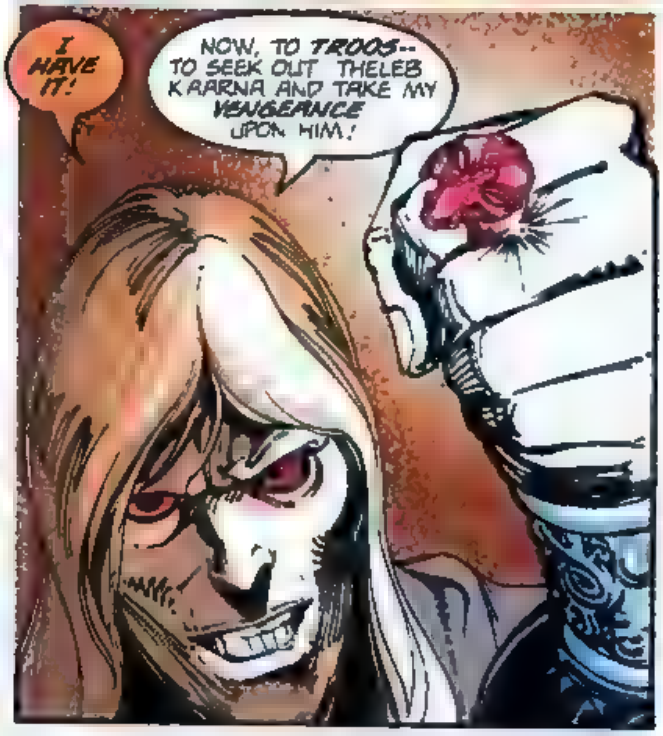
AS I'VE TOLD YOU, ELRIC, SOON CHAOS MUST ENGAGE WITH LAW--AND SUCH AS DOUBLAS THE JUSTICE MAKER, WHO DID HELP YOU, WILL BE DISMISSED TO LIMBO FOREVER.
I WAS OFFENDED BY HIS PATRONIZING YOU, SO I MATERIALIZED ON THIS PLANE TO SHOW YOU MY POWER IS GREATER THAN LAW'S.
PERHAPS EVEN THE FOOLS WHO SERVE TANELORN WILL NOW REALIZE IT IS BETTER TO SERVE CHAOS.

IF YOU REFER TO ME, LORD ARIOCH--
--I SERVE NEITHER CHAOS NOR LAW!

ONE DAY YOU WILL BE TAUGHT THAT NEUTRALITY IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN SIDE-TAKING, RENEGADE
YOU CANNOT HARM ME...AND IF ELRIC RETURNS WITH US TO TANELORN, THEN HE, TOO, MAY RID HIMSELF OF YOUR EVIL YOKE!
17


ELRIC IS OF MELNIBONÉ, RENEGADE
THE FOLK OF MELNIBONÉ ALL SERVE CHAOS — AND ARE GREATLY REWARDED THEREFOR'
H-HE'S G-GOING — I DON'T THINK HE LIKES YOU, RACKHIR
I WILL LIVE


SPARE US THE BRAVADO, RED ARCHER
HELP ME FIND THE RING OF KINGS AMID THIS HOARD OF GEMS AND GOLD AND—

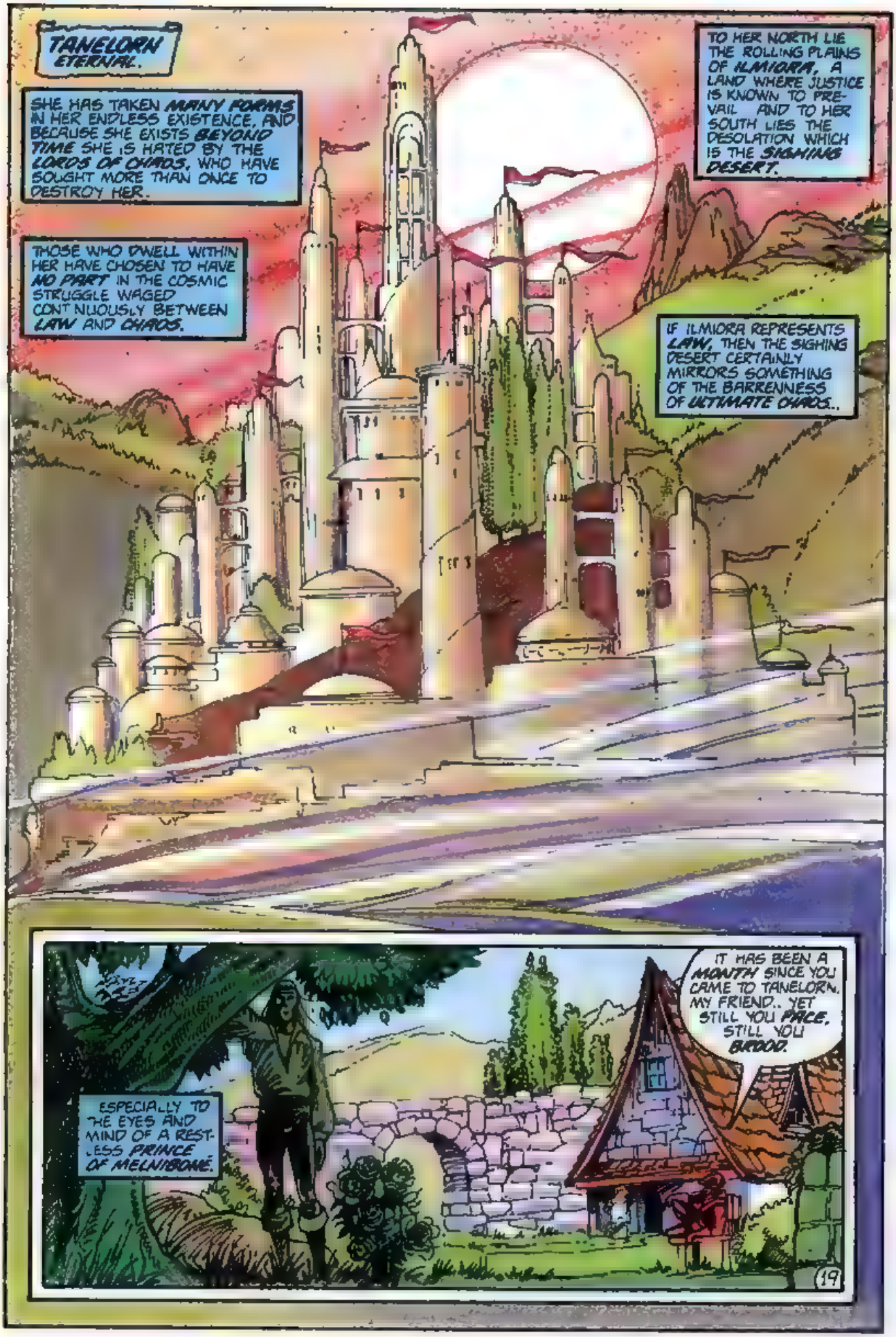

I HAVE IT!
NOW, TO TROOS— TO SEEK OUT THELEB K'AARNA AND TAKE MY VENGEANCE UPON HIM!

OH, LET HIM ROT IN TROOS SICKLY FOREST.
IF HE HATES YOU SO, ELRIC, HE WILL FIND YOU AGAIN.

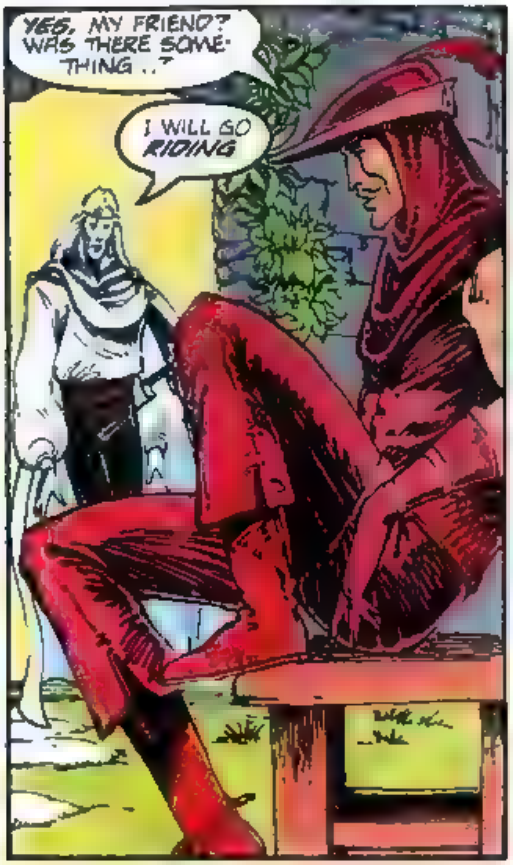
WHY WASTE YOUR OWN TIME IN PURSUIT?
YOU WERE EVER CLEVER IN YOUR ARGUMENTS, AND IT IS TRUE I AM WEARY...

COME, REST IN PEACEFUL TANELORN... WHERE EVEN THE GREATEST LORDS OF THE HIGHER WORLDS CANNOT COME WITHOUT PERMISSION
THERE WILL BE TIME YET TO FULFILL YOUR OATH.

AYE...
TIME YET.


TANELORN ETERNAL.
SHE HAS TAKEN MANY FORMS IN HER ENDLESS EXISTENCE, AND BECAUSE SHE EXISTS BEYOND TIME SHE IS HATED BY THE LORDS OF CHAOS, WHO HAVE SOUGHT MORE THAN ONCE TO DESTROY HER.
TO HER NORTH LIE THE ROLLING PLAINS OF ILMIORA, A LAND WHERE JUSTICE IS KNOWN TO PREVAIL AND TO HER SOUTH LIES THE DESOLATION WHICH IS THE SIGHING DESERT.
THOSE WHO DWELL WITHIN HER HAVE CHOSEN TO HAVE NO PART IN THE COSMIC STRUGGLE WAGED CONTINUOUSLY BETWEEN LAW AND CHAOS.
IF ILMIORA REPRESENTS LAW, THEN THE SIGHING DESERT CERTAINLY MIRRORS SOMETHING OF THE BARRENNESS OF ULTIMATE CHAOS..
ESPECIALLY TO THE EYES AND MIND OF A RESTLESS PRINCE OF MELNIBONÉ.
IT HAS BEEN A MONTH SINCE YOU CAME TO TANELORN, MY FRIEND.. YET STILL YOU PACE, STILL YOU BROOD.
19

WHAT OCCUPIES YOUR THOUGHTS, DAY AFTER DAY?
NO PARTICULAR SUBJECT BUT IT SEEMS I CANNOT LOSE MYSELF IN ALL THIS PEACE. ONLY VIOLENT ACTION HELPS DRIVE AWAY MY MELANCHOLY.
BUT VIOLENT ACTION--OR ITS RESULTS--PRODUCES FURTHER MELANCHOLY, DOES IT NOT?
IT IS TRUE THAT IS THE DILEMMA WITH WHICH I LIVE CONSTANTLY.
.. SINCE THE BURNING OF LARRYR... PERHAPS BEFORE.
I WAS NOT MEANT FOR TANELORN, RACKHIR
WHILE TANELORN MAKES SUCH PROBLEMS MEANINGLESS TO ME WILL YOU STAY ON HERE THEN?
I DO NOT KNOW. IF ONLY CYMORIL'S DEAD FACE DID NOT HAUNT MY NIGHTS.
YOUR POOR COUSIN- AND BELOVED? BUT WHAT OF THIS SORCERESS WHO, YOU SAID, RESEMBLED HER?
MYSHELLA, EMPRESS OF THE DAWN?
I FIRST SAW HER IN A DREAM. WE SERVED EACH OTHER TO ACHIEVE A COMMON PURPOSE
I SHALL NOT SEE HER AGAIN
BUT IF SHE-
I SHALL NOT SEE HER AGAIN, RACKHIR.
AS YOU SAY.
20

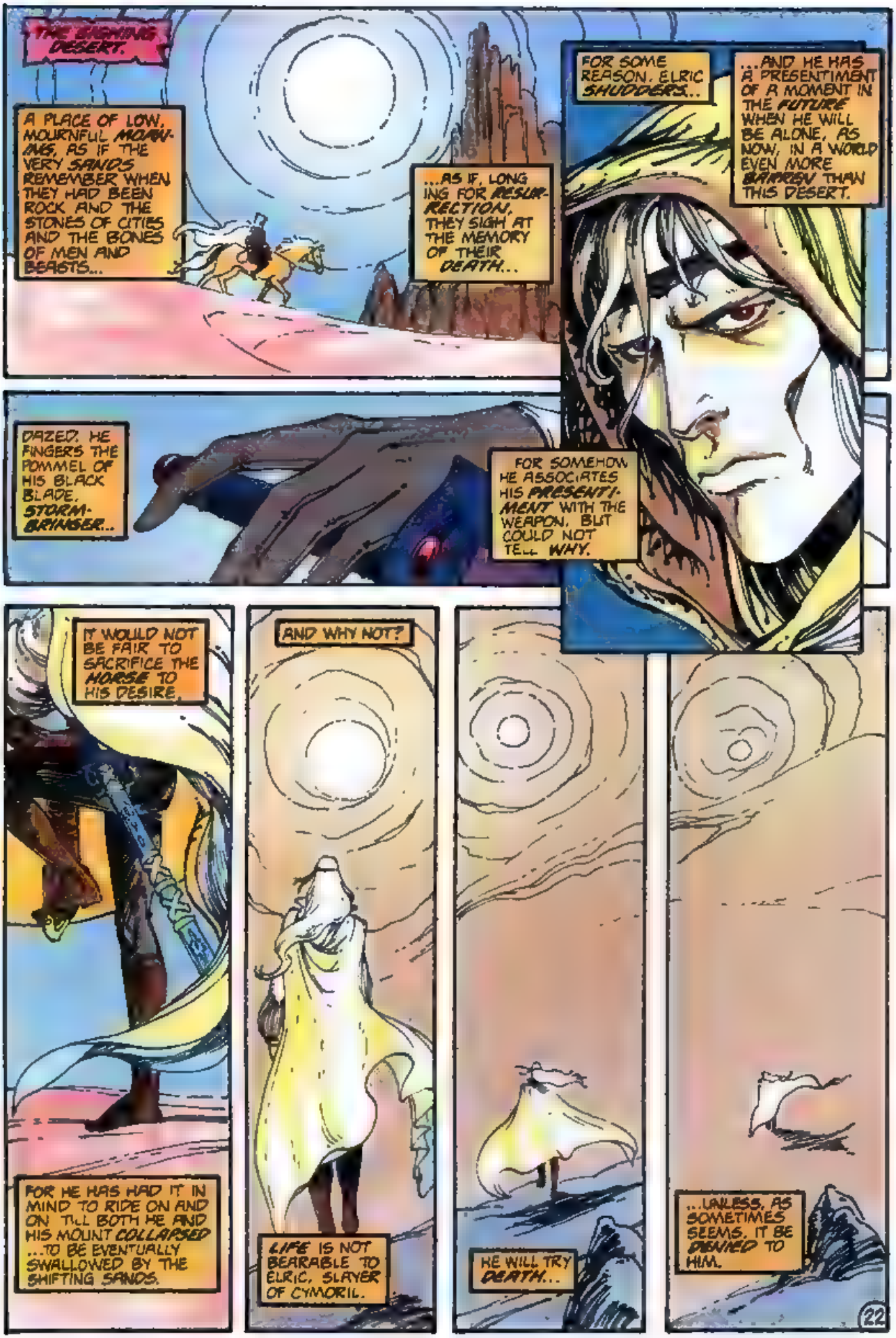

YES, MY FRIEND? WAS THERE SOMETHING..?
I WILL GO RIDING

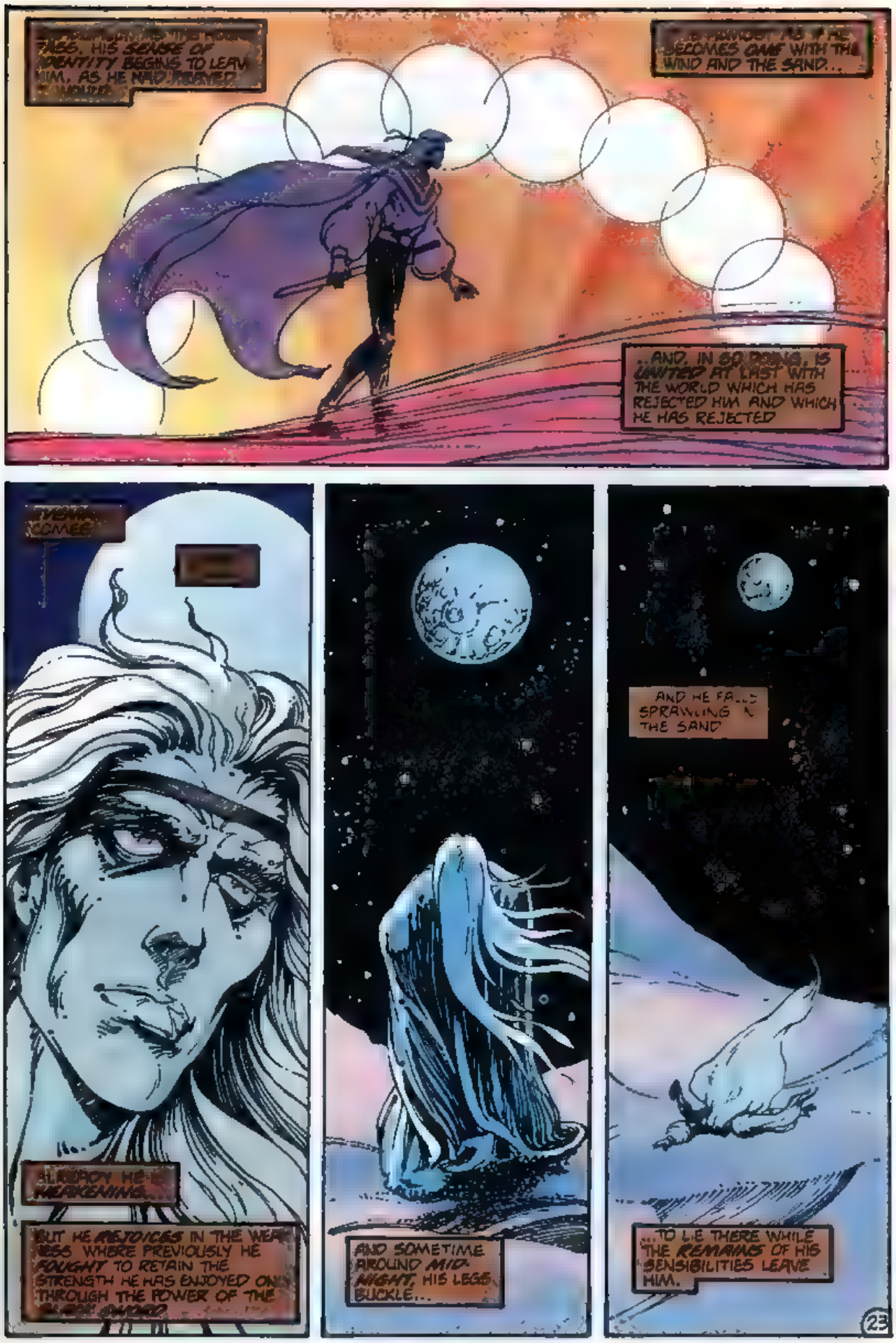
I WILL GO BY MYSELF INTO THE SASHING DESERT, AND I WILL RIDE UNTIL I AM EXHAUSTED.
PERHAPS EXERCISE IS ALL I NEED
TAKE THE BIG GOLDEN MARE AND BE CAREFUL.
THE DESERT IS A SINISTER AND TREACHEROUS WILDERNESS

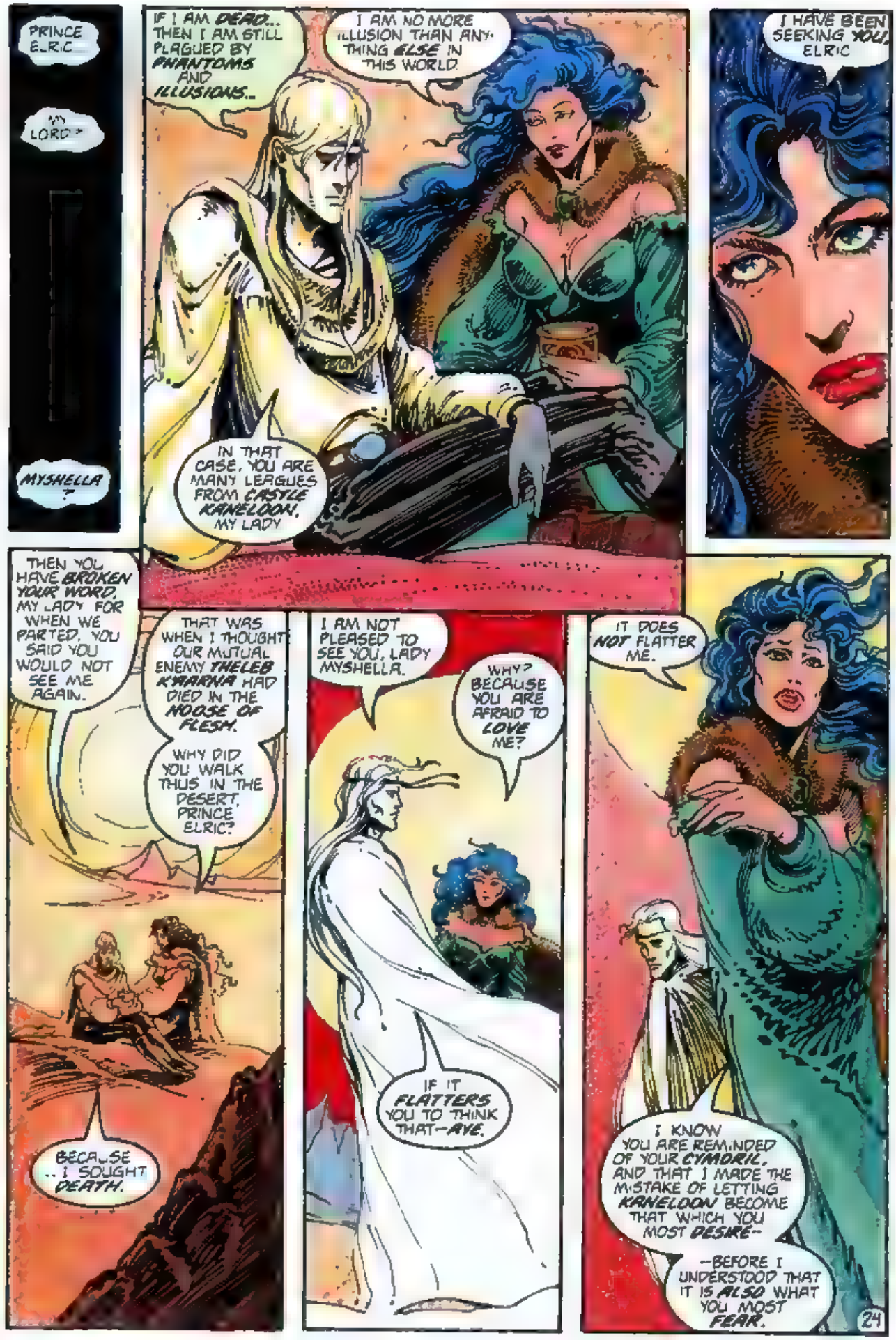
RACKHIR? WHERE GOES ELRIC?
HE LOOKS FOR PEACE... IN THE DESERT.

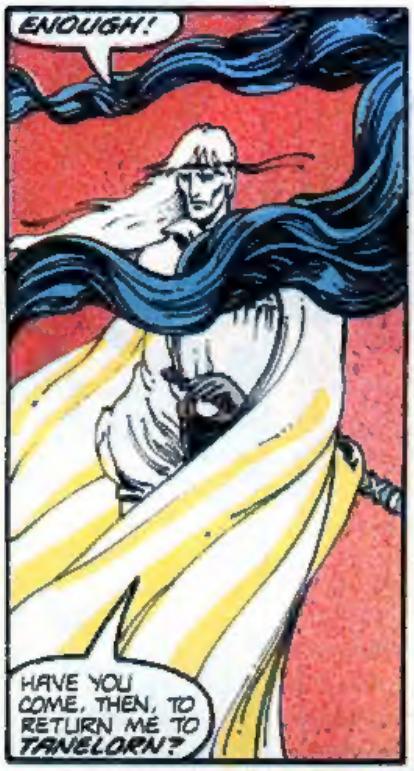
BUT IT IS MY PREMONITION HE'LL DISCOVER SOMETHING ELSE...FOR ELRIC IS NOT ALWAYS MOTIVATED BY HIS OWN WISHES.
HE HAS SOUGHT PEACE IN MANY OTHER PLACES, AND I FEAR HE'LL NOT FIND IT THERE EITHER
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN OTHER FORCES WORK WITHIN HIM TO MAKE HIM TAKE SOME FATEFUL ACTION.
AND YOU THINK THIS IS SUCH A TIME?

IT COULD BE.


THE SHIFTING DESERT.
A PLACE OF LOW, MOURNFUL MOANINGS, AS IF THE VERY SANDS REMEMBER WHEN THEY HAD BEEN ROCK AND THE STONES OF CITIES AND THE BONES OF MEN AND BEASTS...
...AS IF, LONG ING FOR RESURRECTION, THEY SIGH AT THE MEMORY OF THEIR DEATH...
FOR SOME REASON, ELRIC SHUDDERS...
...AND HE HAS A PRESENTIMENT OF A MOMENT IN THE FUTURE WHEN HE WILL BE ALONE, AS NOW, IN A WORLD EVEN MORE BARREN THAN THIS DESERT.
DAZED, HE FINGERS THE POMMEL OF HIS BLACK BLADE, STORM-BRINGER...
FOR SOMEHOW HE ASSOCIATES HIS PRESENTIMENT WITH THE WEAPON, BUT COULD NOT TELL WHY.
IT WOULD NOT BE FAIR TO SACRIFICE THE HORSE TO HIS DESIRE,
FOR HE HAS HAD IT IN MIND TO RIDE ON AND ON TILL BOTH HE AND HIS MOUNT COLLAPSED ...TO BE EVENTUALLY SWALLOWED BY THE SHIFTING SANDS.
AND WHY NOT?
LIFE IS NOT BEARABLE TO ELRIC, SLAYER OF CYMORIL.
HE WILL TRY DEATH...
...UNLESS, AS SOMETIMES SEEMS, IT BE DENIED TO HIM.
22


...HIS SENSE OF IDENTITY BEGINS TO LEAVE HIM, AS HE HAD FEARED.
...BECOMES ONE WITH THE WIND AND THE SAND...
...AND, IN SO DOING, IS UNITED AT LAST WITH THE WORLD WHICH HAS REJECTED HIM AND WHICH HE HAS REJECTED
ALREADY HE IS WEAKENING...
BUT HE REJOICES IN THE WEAKNESS WHERE PREVIOUSLY HE FOUGHT TO RETAIN THE STRENGTH HE HAS ENJOYED ONLY THROUGH THE POWER OF THE BLACK SWORD.
AND SOMETIME AROUND MID-NIGHT, HIS LEGS BUCKLE...
AND HE FALLS SPRAWLING IN THE SAND
...TO LIE THERE WHILE THE REMNANTS OF HIS SENSIBILITIES LEAVE HIM.


PRINCE ELRIC
MY LORD?
MYSHELLA?
IF I AM DEAD... THEN I AM STILL PLAGUED BY PHANTOMS AND ILLUSIONS...
I AM NO MORE ILLUSION THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THIS WORLD
IN THAT CASE, YOU ARE MANY LEAGUES FROM CASTLE KANELOON, MY LADY
I HAVE BEEN SEEKING YOU, ELRIC
THEN YOU HAVE BROKEN YOUR WORD, MY LADY FOR WHEN WE PARTED, YOU SAID YOU WOULD NOT SEE ME AGAIN.
THAT WAS WHEN I THOUGHT OUR MUTUAL ENEMY THELEB K'AARNA HAD DIED IN THE NOOSE OF FLESH.
WHY DID YOU WALK THUS IN THE DESERT, PRINCE ELRIC?
BECAUSE .. I SOUGHT DEATH.
I AM NOT PLEASED TO SEE YOU, LADY MYSHELLA.
WHY? BECAUSE YOU ARE AFRAID TO LOVE ME?
IF IT FLATTERS YOU TO THINK THAT--AYE.
IT DOES NOT FLATTER ME.
I KNOW YOU ARE REMINDED OF YOUR CYMORIL, AND THAT I MADE THE MISTAKE OF LETTING KANELOON BECOME THAT WHICH YOU MOST DESIRE--
--BEFORE I UNDERSTOOD THAT IT IS ALSO WHAT YOU MOST FEAR.
24


ENOUGH!
HAVE YOU COME, THEN, TO RETURN ME TO TANELORN?

NO. I HAVE COME TO TELL YOU WHERE YOU MAY DISCOVER OUR FOE, THELEB K'AARNA.
HE THREATENS YOU AGAIN, DOES HE?
NOT DIRECTLY.
I KNOW YOU WELL, MYSHELLA...

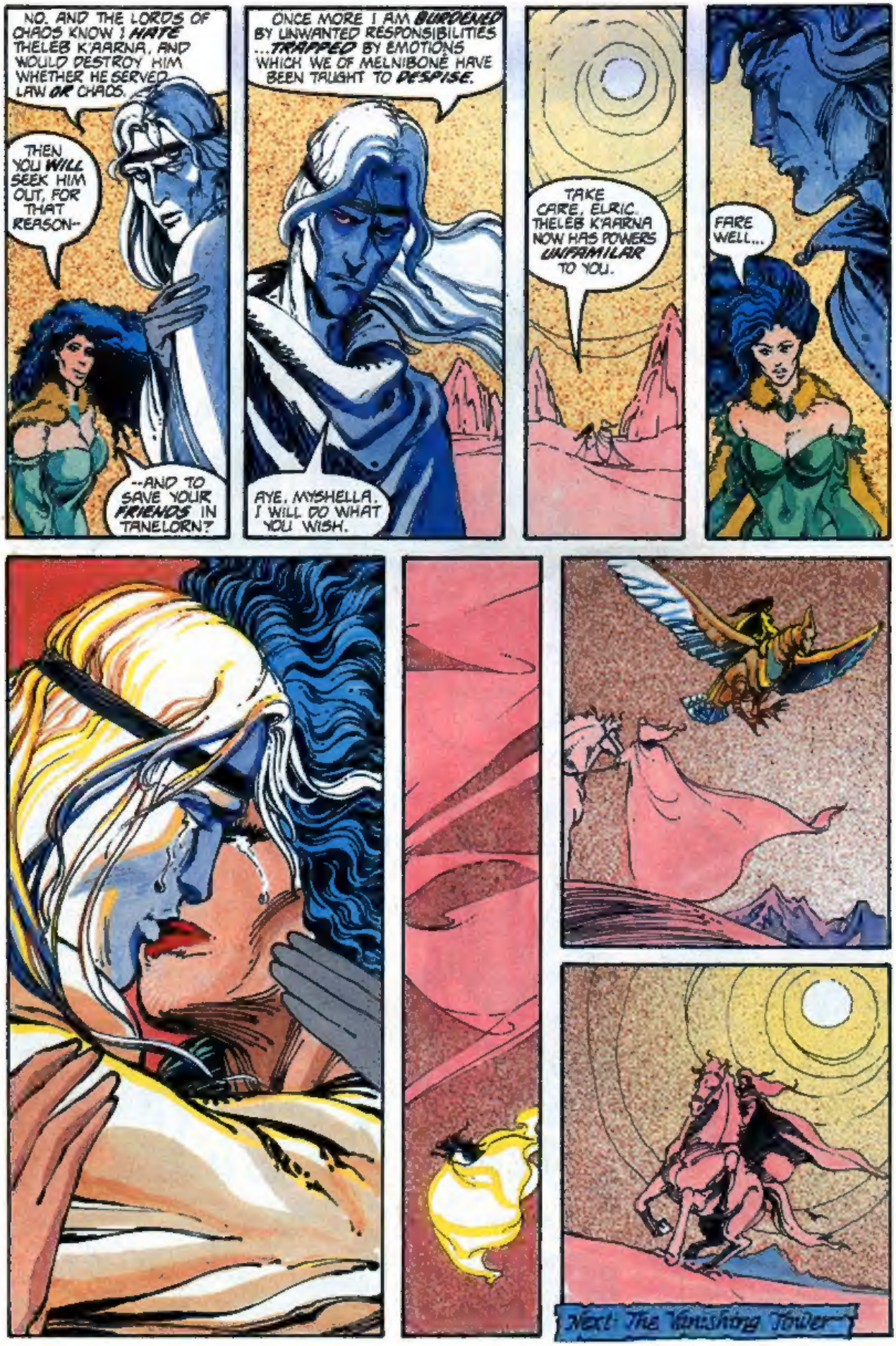
YOU WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH MY DESTINY UNLESS IT HAD AGAIN BECOME IN SOME WAY LINKED WITH YOUR OWN.
AS FOR ME...EVEN MY HATRED OF THELEB K'AARNA HAS WANED, DURING MY TIME IN TANELORN.

AND IF YOU KNEW THELEB K'AARNA ONCE AGAIN THREATENS THE PEOPLE OF TANELORN?
IMPOSSIBLE! TANELORN IS ETERNAL.
BUT ITS CITIZENS ARE NOT. IN TROOS HE HAS DISCOVERED ANCIENT SPELLBOOKS FROM THE AGE OF THE DOOMED FOLK.
THEY SHOWED HIM THE MEANS OF CAUSING A RUPTURE IN THE DIVISION WHICH SEPARATES ONE PLANE OF EARTH FROM ANOTHER.

WITH THE AID OF THE CHAOS LORDS, WHO LOATHE TANELORN, THESE BOOKS HAVE SHOWN HIM HOW TO ACTIVATE CERTAIN BURIED DEVICES OF THE DOOMED FOLK.
HE HAS BROUGHT THOSE DEVICES TO THESE VERY PARTS.
HE IS... IN THE SIGHING DESERT?

YES. BUT YOU SHALL SEE FOR YOURSELF.
HERE COMES YOUR MOUNT.
YOU WANT ME TO GO AGAINST CHAOS, YET CHAOS AIDS ME, AND I AM SWORN TO ARIOCH HIMSELF!

YET MUCH OF YOUR MELANCHOLY IS BECAUSE YOU ARE DIVIDED IN YOUR LOYALTIES.
BESIDES, YOU WOULD NOT BE FIGHTING FOR LAW IF YOU FIGHT THELEB K'AARNA, WOULD YOU?


NO. AND THE LORDS OF CHAOS KNOW I HATE THELEB K'AARNA, AND WOULD DESTROY HIM WHETHER HE SERVED LAW OR CHAOS.
THEN YOU WILL SEEK HIM OUT, FOR THAT REASON--
--AND TO SAVE YOUR FRIENDS IN TANELORN?
ONCE MORE I AM BURDENED BY UNWANTED RESPONSIBILITIES ...TRAPPED BY EMOTIONS WHICH WE OF MELNIBONÉ HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO DESPISE.
AYE, MYSHELLA. I WILL DO WHAT YOU WISH.
TAKE CARE, ELRIC. THELEB K'AARNA NOW HAS POWERS UNFAMILIAR TO YOU.
FARE WELL...
Next: The Vanishing Tower

Melnibonéan Mailbox!

435 N. LASALLE, CHICAGO, IL 60610

Dear First,

I am a die-hard Moorcock fan (the books, the comix, the music) and I'd really like to join a fan club. Could you please list a few? It would be greatly appreciated. And how about listing a "complete" bibliography of Mr. Moorcock's works? Keep up the great work with Elric, Corum, and Hawkmoon — they're awesome!

Randy Sarbacher
922 1/2 Third Street
Clarkston, KA 99403

*The **Elric: Sailor on the Seas of Fate** graphic novel came out in August. Your retailer should be able to order it for you if he's already sold out. As for fan clubs, perhaps some of the readers know?*

Dear Laurel,

I was just re-reading my Elric: The Vanishing Tower and happened to read a letter in the mailbox by a J. Simmons. Your answer was flippant as hell, not very nice. A simple no or yes answer would have done, that's all Mr. Simmons wanted to know.

I have read The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant and the Dragonriders of Pern and think they would be great in comics. A simple yes or no will be fine. All in favor of an adaptation of McCaffery's and Donaldson's books should write in with a rousing "aye!"

R. Smerdon
1180 St. Louis Street
Victoria, BC
Canada V8S 5B6

*My apologies to both you and J. Over half the letters to **Elric**, **Corum** and **Hawkmoon** mention a favorite book readers would like to see adapted. While most are requests to adapt other **Michael Moorcock** novels, other authors make a good showing, too. We appreciate the input, it gives an idea of what readers want to see in the future. But some books, no matter how enjoyable and well written, do not translate well into a visual medium (like comics). A recent example is the movie, Clan of the Cave Bear. Based on Jean Auel's novel, the book was a best-seller but the movie was a dud. Auel's anthropology may be suspect but she did her research and created fascinating characters. The movie, however, was hamstrung by the fact that no one* spoke *(you can do only so much with voice-over narration), and sacrificed the character development that was crucial to the story. Now, perhaps the movie took the wrong tack, but it does point out the problems in shifting from one medium to another.*

Dear First Comics,

Thank you for hiring Jan Duursema to do the art for Elric! For the first time Elric has been drawn the way I have envisioned him. I have been an ardent fan of Michael Moorcock since the first book I ever read of his (Stormbringer) in 1970, and ever since then I've made an effort to collect everything relating to Elric — the most fascinating hero in fantasy literature. Several artists have done pictures (for one or another publisher) of Elric, but none until Jan Duursema ever got him right.

It's true that when you announced she was taking over the art for Elric I was thrilled, because I had always admired her work on Arion, Lord of Atlantis. However, with Elric she surpassed my most optimistic expectations. Please pay her well so that she won't quit!

I am delighted with your inclination to do other Moorcock works as well as Elric. So far, with any of then, my only criticism is that Hawkmoon looks too beefy, whereas I had always imagined him to be thin. I hope someday you will get around to doing the End of Time series and Jerry Cornelius, but I also hope whatever artist you use is as good as Jan Duursema.

By the way, I appreciate the information your letters column provides on Michael Moorcock and Hawkwind trivia. I've never met anyone (except my sister) who likes this sort of thing the way I do, so it is very gratifying to learn all this stuff.

Thank you also for Lone Wolf and Cub, which is as good as a samurai movie, and totally different from any other comic. It doesn't even need color.

Back to the subject of Elric, I'd like to point out that it was the December 1987 issue,

"Thank you for hiring Jan Duursema to do the art for Elric! For the first time Elric has been drawn the way I have envisioned him... [no one] until Jan Duursema ever got him right."

specifically, that was so fine I felt I had to write to express my appreciation. This is the best so far. You can expect me to be a devoted subscriber as long as you maintain these high standards.

Thank you again. My sister says she agrees with what I have written 100%, and so this letter is from her, too.

Louise and Kate Kintz
1420 Steele Street
Denver, CO 80206

Dear Sir,

I am one of the great fans of the graphic novel, Elric of Melniboné. And I am curious as to when you plan to publish the second part of the series which you announced in the inside back of the graphic novel. I forget the name of the title but hopefully you know what I am talking about. (The reason why I forgot is because it, the book, is in the hands of my brother in another state.)

Anyway, the main point is... please do let me know when you plan to have the second *giant* graphic novel of Elric (Part II).

Michael N. Ubowski
P.O. Box 411
Glen Echo, MD 20812

Take a look at the response to the first letter.

Dear Laurel,

Hello! I am a great fan of Michael Moorcock's works, and of your adaptations of Elric, Corum, and Hawkmoon. I am much pleased with seeing American Elric. (I especially love the cover of "Weird of the White Wolf" #2.)

Many of Moorcock's novels have been translated into Japanese. These editions have many illustrations that I am sure are great works of art, too. If you have a chance, please look at Japanese Elric. (Their artwork is never like the artwork of Lone Wolf and Cub!)

I wish you would make your adaptations of other MM's novels — for instance, Glorianna and Dancers at The End of Time — I think they are splendid works, just like the Eternal Champion series.

Anyway, I am looking forward to the next issue.

Yuka Tatara
2-28-6, Hrgashitamagawa
Setagaya-ku, Tokyo
Japan 158

Thanks for the tip, I'll keep my eyes open.

Dear Laurel, Roy and all the Ricks,

Just a brief note to tell you how much I enjoy reading the Elric series. It is one of the best comics in the market at the moment.

Any chance of some Jerry Cornelius adaptations? Apart form Moorcock, Norman Spinrad, James Salkis, M. John Harrison, Brian Aldiss, Langdon Jones and Maxim Jakubowski have all written Cornelius stories so there is plenty of material to adapt. Adaptations I'd hate to see: "King Lear" by Shakespeare and "Bleak House" by Charles Dickens. I've just done them for my A-level English Literature, and believe me, they're both depressing *and* boring!

Alastair Wibon
24, Abbotsford Grove
Timperley, Cheshire
England WA14 5AE

Having a great personal fondness for both Shakespeare and Dickens, I can't agree entirely with your assessment. But you are right, they can be depressing.

NEXT ISSUE: The conclusion of *The Vanishing Tower*, as Elric is summoned to complete the "Three Who Are One," and rescue a besieged Tanelorn. By **Roy Thomas, Jan Duursema** and **Nicholas Koenig.**

And Happy Holidays!

— Laurel Fitch